

# Censor

S A T U R D A Y, F E B R U A R Y 22, 1772.

VEXAT CENSURA COLUMBAS.

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Mr. RUSSELL,

*By inserting the following Piece, lately published in LONDON, you will oblige many of your Readers.* W.

*When a man happens to break in Holland they say of him, that he has not kept good accounts.* STEEL.

I AM an old man, and having employed my whole time in a mercantile occupation, I am very apt, when any matter for consideration comes before me, to try it by the same method I have been used to try the truth of my books; I cast up the sum total on both sides with great care and attention, and am thereby determined in my judgment. If our Politicians could be prevailed upon to adopt the same rule in their proceedings, it would soon put an end to those distractions that now threaten to overwhelm the kingdom in one general ruin; for it is a melancholy, but obvious truth, that the present state of parties among us greatly resembles a state of war, and may too justly be considered as a prelude to it. The Leaders of the people are now setting every engine to work, and are exerting their utmost efforts to destroy the present constitution: How far they may be able to prevail, and (in case they should succeed) what kind of government they will set up, both in church and state, instead of the present, are questions that can be answered only by the event: However, I shall in the mean time lay before the public a calculation of the strength, and an enumeration of the forces on both sides, so that by comparing them together, all persons may be able to judge and act for themselves.

*PARTIES for overturning the present constitution in church and state, and for setting up something in their stead, for which we have not yet a name.*

1<sup>st</sup>. THE idle and dissolute among the common people are for throwing

*PARTIES for preserving the present constitution in church and state, and for keeping every thing in a quiet and peaceable condition.*

1<sup>st</sup>. THE greatest part of the Nobility and Gentry of the kingdom;

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throwing the present system into anarchy and confusion ; they have ardently wished these many years, for some levelling scheme or other whereby they might enrich themselves at the cost of their masters, and rob and plunder with impunity. If Mr. *Wilkes* can lead them into this path of glory, they will joyfully follow him and become his devoted fellow-labourers, in the same good work ; but if not they will forsake him with as little ceremony as they have done some others, and look out for a new leader.

2dly. THAT species among the *whigs* which is properly *republican*, is violently for a change of government, suitable to such principles ; and these men are now become of some consequence, not so much on the score of their numbers, as on account of their enthusiastic zeal, and of their breaking through every tie of honour, honesty, and conscience, for accomplishing such designs. Moreover, as they put on every disguise ; as they forge, lye, falsify ; as they use the word liberty merely as a blind to conceal the batteries they are erecting against it ; and as they pretend to support and uphold the constitution, at the very instant they are planning a scheme to destroy it ; their designs are so much the more dangerous by appearing to fight under the same banner with ourselves ; and the wounds they give are the more difficult of cure, because they stab and assassinate under the mask of friendship, and therefore strike the surer, and the deeper.

3dly. THE advocates for making *North-America* independent of the *British* Parliament, must, if consistent with themselves, be for turning

*Parties for preserving, &c.*

kingdom ; that is, almost all those who have the greatest property at stake, and have the most to lose.

2dly. A vast majority of the richest Merchants, and principal Traders and Manufacturers throughout the kingdom : The exceptions on this head are few, and very inconsiderable.

3dly. THE Clergy of the established church are in general the declared enemies to riotous innovations, and are the friends of peace and good order ; moreover, a clear majority of the most eminent, the most religious, and sober part of the dissenters, professedly avow the same principles, and act accordingly.

4thly. THE Proprietors and Stockholders in the publick funds will undoubtedly range on the side of government ; because they can get nothing, but must necessarily lose by the convulsions of the state, and by the overthrow of that constitution, the preservation of which is their greatest security.

5thly. THE whole body of the learned profession in the law (men who have acquired their knowledge of the constitution from authors of a cast very different from bawling, disappointed Patriots, or hungry pamphleteers ;—these men, I say) in

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ing the *British* constitution into something very different from what it is at present, or ever was ; for the very same plea these men use in regard to *North-America* is, that representation and legislation (a very small part of which is the power of raising taxes) must always go together ; and therefore, as nineteen parts in twenty of the people of *England*, and upwards of ninety-nine parts in an hundred of the people of *Scotland*, are not qualified to be voters, nor ever were, *be their property ever so great* ; that is (according to this new-fashioned doctrine) are not represented in Parliament ; it must inevitably follow, that a vast majority of the inhabitants of *Great-Britain*, as well as of *British America*, have a right to renounce their allegiance to the present government as soon as they please, and to set up for independence. For in fact, according to the dangerous principles now openly avowed, all this multitude of non-electors owe no subjection to that legislature, and to those powers, in the choice or continuance of which they were not consulted. They ought not to be compelled to obey any laws, which were made without their consent, or privity ; and, where they have no representation, they ought not to be subject to any taxation.—So that being thus happily set free from coercion of government, all restraints of law, and burden of taxes ; and having learnt at last to assert those inherent and unalienable rights, which have been so long usurped, they are now restored to a state of the most perfect freedom, and may either chuse another form of government, according to their own fancy ; or else live,

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in general agree, That each member of the House of Commons, though elected by one particular county, city, or borough, doth not represent that particular county, city, or borough, in any *exclusive* sense ; for he represents the whole commons of the realm, one part, and one individual as well as another. A member chosen by the county of *Middlesex*, is not chosen for *Middlesex* exclusively, but for all the subjects of the *British* empire ;—each of whom hath as constitutional a right to his services, and may be as much affected by his parliamentary conduct, as any freeholder of the county of *Middlesex* : And he, on his part, is bound by his office to omit the *smaller* interest of the county of *Middlesex*, or of the *Middlesex Electors*, when standing in competition with the *greater* interests of his fellow-subjects in other places :—So that in short, though some few only, perhaps not a fortieth part of the inhabitants of the whole island, have legal votes for representatives, all in general are *virtually* represented ;—That this is fact and law ; that this ever was the constitution of the *British* empire, from the earliest times down to the present day, I do solemnly affirm : And in this sense it is true, and in *no other*, that every member of the common weal is supposed to give his previous consent to the making those laws, which he is afterwards bound to obey, and to the imposing those taxes which he is obliged to pay. Indeed upon this footing (to wit, of virtual representation in some cases, and of actual election in others) a free and well-poised government can stand and be



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live, as they can, without any government at all. A blessed specimen this of *patriotick liberty*! A most comprehensive bill of rights! Sure of overturning, if carried into execution, every government, that either ever was, or ever can be, proposed to the world.

4thly. THE honourable society of the outs will go as great lengths to throw things into confusion as any set of men whatever; for as these persons have no other end in view than to get into power, and to share the emoluments of the state among themselves and their dependents, they will stick at no measure, however unjust and unconstitutional, to compass this end: Nay, they will unlay the things which they themselves had said in administration; they will blame those very measures which they themselves had planned and recommended; and, in short, they will do any thing, and every thing, to raise the evil spirit of discord and dissension, to bring themselves in.

Lastly. THE inconstant and disappointed, those who love to fish in troubled waters, and those who, having spent their own fortunes, have nothing to lose, but may have a chance to share in the property of other men by a general scramble; also the desperate and daring of every denomination; all these wish for some great and speedy change in the constitution.

be supported; but it can be supported on no other:—Nay, the government of *Boston* itself, and of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, whenever this Colony shall become independent of the Mother Country, must then, as well as now, be supported on this very principle; that is to say, on the very principle, against which they so loudly clamour.

6thly. THE whole legislative power of the kingdom will certainly support their own authority, and not commit *felo de se* to please their enemies.

7thly. THE whole executive power of the kingdom is at present in the hands of his Majesty, and of those who act in his name, and by his authority. There the constitution has placed it, and in no other hands; nor is there the least probability that mobbing, huzzaing, furious speeches and inflammatory libels, without arms, artillery, or ammunition, and without a treasury, will be able to wrest the executive power out of the hands of those who constitutionally enjoy it.

AND now upon this general review and muster of the forces on the malcontent, as well as the government side, let every one consider well within himself, what he ought to do at the present crisis, as a constitutional Patriot, an honest *Englishman*, a loyal subject, and a prudent man.

MERCATOR LONDINENSIS.